



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council  
Reference: Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal draft EIS  
scoping comments

January 21, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. Today I write on behalf of over 1,000 members and colleagues. We are extremely concerned about the many potential adverse health impacts associated with the Gateway Pacific Terminal and project, including transport of coal, the most toxic of all fossil fuels, from the Powder River Basin through our shared Columbia Gorge to a Cherry Point export facility.

Many direct and indirect local impacts will be real and measurable. These impacts, including potential degradation of current and future drinking water sources, must be examined. We are particularly concerned with the health of our most vulnerable populations: prenatal, early childhood, the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions.

In Oregon, over 150 physicians have requested that there be review of a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment (to include cumulative impacts) before any coal export facility or infrastructure is approved. Over 180 non-physician public health professionals and providers have made a similar request. Thus far, no Health Impact Assessment has been initiated.

Therefore, it is imperative that a comprehensive, independent Health Impact Assessment be performed and included in the draft EIS for the Gateway Pacific Terminal and associated project.

We support, and incorporate by reference, the request of Whatcom and Skagit County Physicians for a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to be included in this EIS. As public health advocates, we share the concerns, questions and scoping comments of these physicians.

Additionally, we call on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to not approve any permits associated with the Gateway Pacific Terminal and this project in the absence of an area-wide Environmental Impact Statement. Health impacts to residents of the Pacific Northwest from the combustion of exported coal include, but are not limited to, those impacts associated with the release of millions of tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, and must be examined.

We have a moral obligation to look and not leap into a future plagued by increasingly severe storms, displacement, instability, hunger, morbidity and mortality.

Thank you,



Regna Merritt  
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility

